

THE BACKGROUND GROUP.

The crowd hums, the music madly plays;
The meet, for, lo, it is the day of days;
The home returning heroes come; a cry
Of welcome should be lifted to the sky
And flowers strew the people trampled ways.

The drums beat martially; with rhythmic beat
The steps around along the gaping street.
Hark! What acclamations! And how the folk do
press

To see, to touch, may be, the very dream
Of those who dared the death when life is sweet!

But stay! Where joy is general, where the sound
Of jubilant voices rends the air around,
Why is your group so silent in its place,
With war's impassioned image face to face?
Wherefore those eyes cast nimbly on the ground?

Who are these hangers back, these dark robed
ones?

They are the mothers who are left of sons,
The wives whose dearest lie all unreturned
Alas with vital stains on brow or breast;
The children orphaned at the mouth of gun.

—Richard Burton in Outlook

A Sentimental Journey

And Its Results.

By GILBERT DAYLE.

It was about 4 o'clock one afternoon in February, and Hippesley was sitting on the veranda of the Café de Paris at Monte Carlo. He sat deep in thought, his ears mechanically listening to the strains of the little Hungarian band a few yards away from him. He was thinking of the reason that had brought him to the place. He had been abroad for 12 years, yet within a month of his return he had left again and hurried to spend a few days on the Riviera before taking steamer at Marseilles.

It was absurd, he knew it, but the longing to see her face again was irresistible. He would not seek an opportunity of speaking with her. The scheme on which their lives had been worked out made this impossible. He simply had an overwhelming desire to see her. Then he could go back to his lonely life, not happy, he could never be that, but with a fresh picture of the one woman he had ever loved.

He noticed a smart carriage draw up before the broad steps of the Casino, and almost simultaneously a man and a woman came out of the building. The man was middle aged, a trifle heavy in build and faultlessly dressed. He handed the lady into the carriage. Hippesley, as he caught sight of her face, gave a start and clutched hold of the table. She was a young English woman, magnificently beautiful.

The color left his face, and he riveted his eyes on her. He watched her smilingly say "goodbye" to the man on the steps; then the carriage turned and drove rapidly away. As it vanished from sight he sank back in his chair, his mouth twitching. His throat seemed dry and parched; he stretched forward and drank some tea at a gulp. Then the voices of two men talking just behind him reached his ears.

"That was the Princess Zandra. She is living at the Villa Erondel, at Beaulieu."

"Enormously rich?"

"She was till a day or so ago." The man lowered his voice. Hippesley found himself straining for the next words. "I happen to know," came in almost a whisper, "that the late prince was sufficiently ill advised to invest nearly all his money in an enterprise that has recently come to the ground with a crash, and the princess, who never had the slightest suspicion of her affairs not being in a satisfactory state, has suddenly been told that another year at her present rate of expenditure will leave her penniless."

"What will she do?"

"Go on living as she has done and marry again. Women with such beauty can pick and choose. There are no hard places for them. Rumor says it will be the man who has just left her. He is not a good man, but he is passionately in love with her and a millionaire twice over."

Hippesley rose from his seat and, making his way round to the terrace, sank into a seat. He felt he could hear no more. It was all so curious, so startlingly strange. To think that the girl he had left living with her father on the outskirts of a quiet English country town should have developed into this wonderful Princess Zandra, whose beauty was known throughout Europe. And they had loved one another! He had gone abroad with the hope of making a name for himself, of being able to claim her. But ill luck had dogged him, and the time had never come when he could write to her. He had left her free, and as the years went by, bringing nothing but persistent failure, he knew that it was not for him to possess the only thing he counted worth having. Occasionally scraps of intelligence as to the course her life had taken drifted to him. Her father had died, and she had gone to live with a wealthy aunt in London. From stray papers that reached him he learned that her beauty had caused quite a sensation in society. Then at last came the news that she had married a foreigner of great position, Prince Zandra.

He wondered if she ever thought of him—remembered the night he had confessed his love to her. Not a day had passed in those long years of failure but her image had been before him. Now, at length, when he had achieved some slight success, it was too late. All that was left for him was to take the absurd little journey of sentiment.

Early next morning he traveled to Beaulieu. He got out at the railway station and, following the path that led round to St. Jean, passed the fishing village and gained the Point. There he sank down on the ground and gave himself up to his reflections. It was a perfect morning, a cloudless sky, the air soft and pregnant with the perfume of the roses that grew right to the edge of the tiny cliff. Some 30 feet below him was the sea, not a ripple on its smooth surface, the clear blue tints gleaming in the sunshine.

Presently he was aware of a woman gazing curiously at him. The next moment he had recognized one another. She went suddenly pale, and her lips parted in wonder.

"Hullo!" she gasped.

He looked at her mutely. He was face to face with her at last, and the blood went throbbing through his veins.

"Yes, just Ralph," he said mechanically.

She held out her hand, and he took it awkwardly.

"And to think it is you after all these years!" she said softly.

Hippesley did not speak. His thoughts had flown back a dozen years to the night when he had left her. An indelible idea came to him that she, too, was thinking of the same thing.

"I won't lie," he said abruptly. "I am not here by chance. I heard you were on the Riviera, and after all these years I wanted to see you again—just to see you; I had no notion of speaking."

She gazed at him steadily, as if trying to read his thoughts.

"You have loved me all this time?" she asked slowly.

He bowed his head. She turned away with a little sob.

"And you never wrote?" she cried.

"Oh, why didn't you write?"

"I was a failure—such an utter failure I could not write to claim you," he said mournfully. "You did well. I wasn't worth waiting for."

She looked at him, the tears glistening in her eyes.

"What a jumble fate made of our lives!" she sighed.

"It did not matter. You are the Princess Zandra."

"Oh, I am tired—tired to death of it all!" she cried in a tone of utter weariness. "To have to live in an artificial world, among people who are not my people—there is no one left to me now—and to have to begin it all over again!" she added in a half sorrowful, musing tone.

He understood. He remembered the words he had overheard at the café. It was all true, then. She looked up at him quickly, with a smile.

"But you, Ralph, what have you done?" she asked gently.

"For years nothing. Now, at last, I've got a small estate in Ceylon. It's a fair living, while I work hard—not a bad life, too, for a man who has lost his ambitions."

"No, not a bad life," she repeated. "A lonely one, though." She gave a little laugh. There was an infinite note of sadness in it. "As lonely as mine has been."

She lifted her head, and their eyes met. He read something in her gaze—a something that sent him trembling from head to foot.

"My God, Esme!" he cried. "If—if you were not the Princess Zandra!"

He saw her eyes suddenly shine, the color rush to her cheeks.

"Remember only that I am a poor woman again," she whispered; "that I've never forgotten, never could forget"—Her voice died away.

His brain was in a whirl. It seemed hardly possible.

"But the life!" he cried. "Think, after all, you've—"

"I only loved once. It was you I thought had forgotten!"

The low, soft voice came to a stop. They stood looking into one another's eyes.

"Don't send me back to the old life again, Ralph," she murmured.—Mainly About People.

Still Readable.

Mr. Hawley looked down at his wife with pitying indulgence as she sat busily writing in a small book the day after Christmas. "Copying that old list of names and presents, my dear, I suppose," he said lightly. "Now, how much better it would be if you would just exercise your memory as I do mine and save all this writing year after year. Why, I sent 40 presents," repeated Mr. Hawley, rising on his toes and falling on his heels to emphasize his statement, "and yet I make no note of them save in my mind, my dear."

"I know you're wonderful in that way, Henry," said little Mrs. Hawley meekly, "but I'm sure I should make mistakes if I didn't keep a list. Oh, here's a letter that came for you from Jack in the last mail this afternoon."

The indulgent smile lingered on Mr. Hawley's face as he opened his letter, but it faded and his color heightened as he read his nephew's communication:

Dear Uncle—Thank you very much for the handsome copy of "Vanity Fair." I am sure, as father says, that I shall enjoy reading it just as much as I did when you gave it to me last year and the year before and the year before that. Your affectionate nephew, JACK.

—Exchange.

She Stopped the Car.

When a Fourth avenue car bound down town approached Eighteenth street the other morning a determined looking woman asked the conductor to stop the car at the corner. He nodded and evidently forgot all about it. The car rolled past Eighteenth street without stopping. The woman arose and with an angry glance at the conductor began ringing up fares. She evidently had tried that method of stopping a car before, for when the conductor gave the motorman a sharp signal to stop and the car did stop abruptly she said triumphantly:

"I thought that would remind you."

"But you have rung up five fares," said the conductor.

"Then why didn't you stop at Eighteenth street?" asked the woman. "It serves you just right," and off she bounced. The other passengers smiled appreciatively, and the conductor made a careful count of the money in his pockets.—New York Sun.

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Poets' Opinions of Each Other.
A good story about Browning and Tennyson is to be found in the diary of the Right Hon. Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff. Browning referred readily to the charge of obscurity in his poetry. "He once told me," says Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, "after repeating a story Wordsworth had told him illustrating his own strange want of humor and wit, that Wordsworth, after all, was unjust to himself, for that on hearing of Browning's engagement to Miss Barrett he had said, 'Well, I suppose they understand each other, although nobody understands them!'"

Tennyson's opinion of Browning (and, incidentally, of himself) is shown in his remark that "Browning is devoted to music and knows a great deal about it, but there is no music in his verse. I know nothing about music and don't care for it in the least, but my verse is full of music."

In reading Milton's Lycidas aloud, says Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, Tennyson would stop at the line,

And, oh, ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

with the comment that this was "the only bad line Milton ever wrote."—Harper's Weekly.

The Island of Jersey.
The police court of St. Helier, the principal town of the island of Jersey, is remarkable in several respects. First, the proceedings are always opened with prayer; second, it frequently happens that after prayer there is no more business, and every one goes home. There is so little crime committed in the island that the police force (twenty strong) is kept up only for visitors. The beautiful carving in oak which forms the rostrum of this court is the work of a lady named Coxedge, a resident of the island. The dock is remarkable for its spaciousness and comfort. The authorities are very lenient with their prisoners, who are kept here, for court and station are under one roof. In the words of the genial old turnkey, "When we gets 'em brought in drunk during the day, if they behave well we lets 'em out at night." Every "bobby" is obliged to know the Psalms. It's all he has to do.

Billiard Balls.
Billiard balls are made of Zanzibar ivory, the other ivory, known as the Bombay ivory, being too liable to crack or chip. The Zanzibar ivory is soft and therefore lasts better. The regulation ball is two and three-eighths inches in diameter, and a set of four costs about \$30. They are rough turned—that is, turned a little larger than the balls are to be when finished—and are stored away in open crates for from sixteen to twenty-two months to season the ivory after being turned and to allow any shrinkage to take place before the balls are finished. If the balls were not seasoned in this way they would be liable to shrink after they were finished, and as they only shrink in the direction of the grain, they would become oval instead of remaining round, as they should be, and it would be necessary to have them turned again.

Many John Smiths.
In Latin, John Smith is Johannes Smithius; in Italian, Giovanni Smithi or Fabbri; in Spanish, Juan Smithas; in Dutch, Hans Smiths or Schmidt or Schmitzes; in French, Jean Smeets; in Greek, Ion Skmiton; in Polish, Ivan Schmittewski; in Welsh, Iibon Schmid; in Scotch, Jean Gowans; in Russian, Jouloff Skmittowski; in Chinese, Jahon Shummit; in Icelandic, Jahne Smithson; in Mexican, Jonthi F-Smith; in Tuscarora, Ton Qu Smit-tia.

Heroic War Measures.
Chaka, a great African native chief, trained a powerful army which was famous in war. If a regiment was beaten it was slaughtered on its return to the king's palace. If any man lost his weapon in war he was killed for cowardice. If the chief wanted to see what kind of weapons were most successful he would order a sham fight with them, in which real lives would be lost.

Editor Versus Lawyer.
A lawyer in a courtroom may call a man a liar, scoundrel, villain or thief, and no one makes a complaint when court has adjourned. If a newspaper prints such reflections on a man's character there is a libel suit or a dead editor. And this is owing to the fact that people believe what an editor says; what a lawyer says cuts no figure.—Routt County (Colo.) Courier.

The Place for a Pupil.
"And there is one thing about the pupil of the eye that I can't say about lots of other pupils," remarked the teacher.

"What is that?" asked the scholars in chorus.

"It is always found up around the head."—Yonkers Statesman.

Making Sure.
Mr. Tottlerly—Could you marry a very old man with a good deal of money if he told you frankly how old he was and how much he was worth? Miss Timely—How much is he worth?

Then He Went.
Unwelcome Suitor—That's a lovely song. It always carries me away. She—If I had known how much pleasure it could give us both I would have sung it earlier in the evening.

The Usual Formula.
It makes no difference how small a boy is, when his mother scolds him she always says, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a big boy like you!"

He who commits an injustice is ever made more wretched than he who suffers it.—Plato.

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